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ABSTRACT

While materials for teaching for intergroup understandings in the form of books, curriculum guides, and articles are widely available for direct implementation into ongoing curricula, the actual development and implementation of this type of material into school programs has usually been reserved for specifically designated national dates. However, the authors of this paper were invited, in January 1971, to assist four sixth-grade teachers who wished to "teach something about other people to our children," although not committed to engaging in a research project designed to assess the effects of their instruction during the implementation of the unit. The entire sixth-grade class of 86 served as the experimental group and another school's entire sixth-grade class was secured as the control group. Both groups were given a pre- and post-test using the Paired Hands Test. The experimental "treatment" was sequenced into eight increasingly interactive steps: panel discussions, film-strip presentations, buzz sessions, open-ended stories, discrimination day, field trip to an all-white inner city school, field trip to an all-black inner city school, and a cooperative, three-school skating party and luncheon.
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# Assessment of an Intervention Curriculum Unit in Intergroup Education

by

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Literally, tens of hundreds of books and articles have been published during the past fifteen years (the so-called highwater mark of the civil rights movement) exclaiming the necessity to look at and deal with the issue of racism as it operates within the school setting. Institutes and workshops in human relations, race relations, and intergroup understandings have been conducted for adults and high school students by universities, schools, church groups, community relations groups, and civic organizations. Methods and materials for these types of efforts have been codified by several authors (Grambs, 1968; Epstein, 1968; Unesco, 1968; Starr, 1969; Yinger, 1965; and Mack, 1970).

While materials for teaching for intergroup understandings in the form of books, curriculum guides, and articles are widely available for direct implementation into ongoing curricula, the actual development and implementation of this type of material into school programs has usually been reserved for specifically designated national dates (usually Negro History Week or Brotherhood Week). Consequently, when the authors of this paper were invited in January, 1971 to assist four sixth-grade teachers who wished to "teach something about other people to our children," we were most gratified. At the outset, the teachers were merely looking for ideas and materials for use in their classrooms. They had no prior commitment to engaging in a research project designed to assess the effects of

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their instruction during the implementation of the unit. When faced with the prospect of randomly assigning their students to experimental and control groups, the teachers became even more hesitant toward the prospect of assessing the effects of the unit. In order to inaugurate the unit and still collect pre- and post-test data, it was agreed that the entire sixth-grade class of 86 Ss (51 males and 35 females) would serve as the experimental groups, and that another school's entire sixth-grade class would be secured to act as the control group. While this accommodation precluded the meeting of the assumption of random assignment of subjects to treatment and control groups, it was necessary to accept the limitations attendant to this compromise in order to retrieve any data whatsoever. In effect, a trade-off was made and the researchers were willing to accept the parameters that were implied by effecting this type of conciliation.

## METHOD

Subjects. The experimental group of a sixth grade class of 86 Ss (51 males and 35 females) was used. A control sixth-grade class of 105 Ss was subsequently secured (66 males and 39 females), and both control and experimental groups were pre-tested on the Paired-hands Test. These two sets of pre-measure data served as the baseline information for the study.

It is essential, at this point, to indicate that the experimental group students were from an all-white, suburban, upper-middle and upper class community, and that the control group students were from an all-white, rural, lower-middle and lower-class community. There was no significant difference on the pre-measures for the two groups.

Design. Both experimental and control groups were given a pre and post-test using the Paired Hands Test developed by Zucker and Jordan (1968). They have reported test-retest reliability coefficients of .75 and .66 for Ss from the Children's International Summer Village and Ss from American public schools, respectively. The Paired Hands Test consists of nine colored slides which are presented in a standard sequence to a group of Ss who have answer sheets with six possible responses for each item. The Ss score was the sum of the points given for the response selected for each of the nine items. Since a S could earn zero, one, or two points depending upon his choice, the range from lowest to highest score was zero to eighteen. Low scores are interpreted as a measure of the person's hostility while high scores are interpreted as a measure of a person's friendliness. The dependent variable then, was the score of each subject on the Paired Hands Test.

Comparisons were made across the experimental and control groups and across sex of subjects. Since a pre-post test design was used, the analysis of covariance was used when the covariate was the pre test score. This resulted in a 2 x 2 ANOCVA design.

Procedures. After the initial base line data were collected, the four teachers of the four sixth-grade classes in the experimental group met to map out the components for the intergroup education curriculum unit. The unit was sequenced into eight increasingly interactive steps: panel discussions, film-strip presentations, buzz sessions, open-ended stories, discrimination day, field trip to an all-white inner city school, field trip to an all-black inner city school, and a cooperative, three-school skating party and luncheon.

A delineation of the content and procedures used in each of the eight steps of the intervention intergroup education unit will facilitate comprehension of the scope and sequence of the treatment. The initial phase of the

unit, called a panel discussion, consisted of three male university faculty members interacting with all 86 experimental Ss on the topic of "What I Remember It Was Like When I was Twelve Years Old." The panel discussants were a jew, a black, and a mexican-american who each gave a brief ten minute introductory resume of his recollection with special emphasis on the ethnic singularity associated with his recollections. A two-hour question and answer session immediately followed with what can only be described as enthusiastic participation by all concerned. This activity was carried out on January 19, 1971. Following the panel presentation, the second phase of the unit was carried out on January 20, 22, and February 2, 1971. The entire experimental population was divided by their teachers into five groups to view a series of filmstrips that dealt with the unique and positive contributions made to our national life by American Indians, Japanese, Chinese, Jews, Negroes, and Puerto Ricans. Two additional filmstrips on the nature of prejudice were added to this collection about minority peoples' contributions. The students both viewed the filmstrips, recorded their impressions, and discussed their feelings and perceptions with their classmates and teachers. The third phase of the treatment unit, free-form buzz sessions, was designed to provide interactive settings wherein the students would be able to openly and freely express their views on the role(s) of minority groups in America. These sessions occurred on Feb. 3, 12, and 16. The fourth component in the unit was an exercise designed for independent rather than group activity. The children were given short, open-ended stories which dealt with themes of racial discrimination or slurs upon someone's heritage, and asked to complete the story line as they saw fit. A film-strip entitled Black Rabbits, White Rabbits was also used as an open-ended device designed to promote personal projection of feelings and attitudes as a consequence of completing the story line. These open-ended story techniques were employed on the same days as the

free-form buzz sessions, but at different times during the school day.

The fifth phase in the curriculum unit was called "discrimination day." The four teachers asked selected children if they would like to participate in a special experiment. When the child agreed, he was given a piece of yarn to wear as an arm band, but was not told what was about to happen to him. For the remainder of that morning, all children with the yarn arm bands (about half of the class) were systematically discriminated against: not called upon in class; their desks were isolated from the other children; they were last dismissed to leave the class for recess; took drinks last; were ridiculed or "picked on" by the teachers; and had their school work unjustly criticized. As the school day came to a close, the four sixth grade classes were brought together as a total group to discuss the events that had taken place. A direct quote from the teachers' log provides one view of the worth of this activity:

> At 11:00, the four classes came together to discuss and evaluate discrimination morning. Unquestionably it seemed to be one of the highlights of our Inter Group activities and all the children thoroughly enjoyed it. Quite naturally the experimental group grew closer throughout the morning and on the playground, they played together. As one of the more verbal members of the group stated afterwards, "We decided we would have 'yarn power' if we stuck together."
>
> The comments made by the students during our evaluation period displayed great insight and clearly told us our "learning through living technique" was a success!"

During the first days of March (2-9) the experimental subjects engaged in three interactive, face-to-face visitations with children from two inner-city schools. On March 2, a visit was arranged wherein half of the experimental Ss visited one all-white, poor, lower-class inner-city school, and the remaining half visited an all-black, poor, lower-class inner city school. On March 5, the experimental Ss and the children whom they had visited in the inner-city schools held an ice-skating party and sack lunch get-together at an ice rink located in one of the city's municipal parks. On March 9, a second visitation

took place with the experimental Ss exchanging sites.

In recapitulating, we find eight distinct components in the curriculum unit. They are delineated in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Components in the Intervention Intergroup Education Curricula

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Panel Discussion | 1/19/71 |
| 2. | Filmstrips | 1/20,22/71 and 2/2/71 |
| 3. | Buzz Sessions | 2/3, 12, 16/71 |
| 4. | Open-ended stories | 2/3, 12, 16/71 |
| 5. | Discrimination Day | 2/24/71 |
| 6. | Field trips to Inner-City Schools | 3/2/71 |
| 7. | Skating Party and Sack Lunch | 3/5/71 |
| 8. | Second Field visits to Inner-City Schools | 3/9/71 |

The post-test was administered to the experimental Ss on March 24, 1971, and the unit was brought to a close.

## RESULTS

The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2. There is a significant difference for the control versus the experimental group. The experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group on the post test. ($F = 28.89$, $df = 1,186$, $p < .001$) There are no significant effects for sex of Ss or for the interaction.

TABLE 2

Results of ANOCOVA for Comparisons of Experimental with Control Group and Sex of Ss

| Source | d.f. | SS | MS | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental vs Control (A) | 1 | 120.73 | 120.73 | 28.89* |
| Sex of Ss (B) | 1 | 6.07 | 6.07 | 1.45 |
| A x B | 1 | 2.67 | 2.67 | .64 |
| Within | 186 | 777.34 | 4.18 | |
| Total | 189 | 906.81 | 135.65 | 30.98 |

* $p < .001$

In Table 3 a summary of some of the statements made by teachers based upon interviews with pupil participants is shown.

TABLE 3

Evaluation Comments by Teachers
Based on Interviews with Pupils

| Evaluative Statement |
|---|
| 1. There were too many filmstrips. Some were needed, however, for background and understanding of the problem, no matter what the children thought. |
| 2. The best learning was through "life experiences" -- Discrimination Day and visitation days. |
| 3. Intergroup understanding is hard to <u>teach</u>. We can only hope for exposure and more sensitivity to this through some (slight) changes in attitudes. |
| 4. The students' attitudes toward minorities may have changed slightly, but towards each other not at all. This is too much to hope for, realistically in 6 to 8 weeks. |

## DISCUSSION

The researchers fully acknowledge the threat that exists with reference to the credibility of the findings in that the assumptions of randomness were not met, but the trade-off made (and previously discussed) was necessary in order to collect the data. An additional study which closely approximates this one is now being carried out by the authors and the assumption of random assignment to experimental and control groups has been met.

The teacher-recorded evaluation comments are meaningful in that they reflect no significant shift in attitudes on the part of their students toward minority people, wherein the analysis of the criterion measures data would tend to indicate otherwise. The feelings that "life experiences" (Discrimination Day and the Inter-school Visitation) are the best learning episodes would gain

plaudits from several theorists, and that intergroup understanding is hard to teach perhaps tells us something about teachers and their own proclivities, competencies, and attitudes.

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